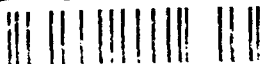


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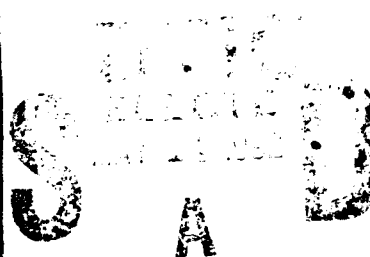
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## EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION TO DEAL WITH LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT IN A THIRD WORLD COUNTRY (PHILIPPINES)

BY

Colonel Calixto F. Banana  
Philippine Army



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EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION TO DEAL WITH  
LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT IN A  
THIRD WORLD COUNTRY  
(PHILIPPINES)

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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## ABSTRACT

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Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) is the most likely scenario facing the countries of the world in the immediate future. Countries can best learn to deal with it by understanding its nature, the environment where it occurs, and the character of the forces that engage in it.

This study discusses LIC from the perspective of a Third World country where it is generally localized. It uses the examples of insurgent forces in the Philippines to illustrate the importance of organization of an insurgent force as it relates to the nature of the conflict and the environment where it is fought. The study also discusses the organization of counterinsurgency forces and flaws that affect the counterinsurgency operations. A model organization of government forces, both at the national level and down at the military operational level, is also presented based on the thesis that the effective way to deal with insurgencies is an effective organization.

The study presents a model of how an intervening power may come in to support a counterinsurgency effort and synchronize its support without creating unfavorable reactions from the host country.

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EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION TO DEAL WITH  
LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT IN A  
THIRD WORLD COUNTRY  
(PHILIPPINES)

INTRODUCTION

What is Low Intensity Conflict?

Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) is the most likely scenario facing the countries of the world in the immediate future. It is important for the military leaders of the world to understand these conflicts to be able to respond and deal with them effectively when called upon. The peaceful resolution of these conflicts and the prevention of their spillover to neighboring countries depends heavily on the handling and application of appropriate measures and responses. This study intends to contribute toward this understanding for United States military officers as well as those from third world countries where these conflicts are expected to be localized.

The term low intensity conflict has been defined and analyzed in different ways by different sources. There is a strong challenge in understanding the term especially among Third World countries like the Philippines. This is one of the big challenges that this study brings, to discern how to deal with it effectively especially in the Philippines where there is an on-going conflict.

## Definitions of Low Intensity Conflict -

John Schlight in his article Low Intensity Conflict, said that the tendency to confuse "conflict" with combat has resulted in the disproportionate view of small wars, such as the Libyan strike and the Panama invasion, as low intensity conflicts. He said that "conflict" in LIC is not combat and low intensity conflicts are not small wars.<sup>1</sup>

Dennis Drew in his paper, Insurgency and Counterinsurgency, said that the term LIC is non-descriptive and chauvinistic. He thinks that LIC includes only insurgency and counterinsurgency.<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. Army, Air Force and the Joint Chiefs of Staff define Low Intensity Conflict as:

a political-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and above the peaceful competition among states. It frequently involves protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies. Low intensity conflict ranges from subversion to the use of armed force. It is waged by a combination of means employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments. Low intensity conflicts are often localized, generally in the third world, but contain regional and global security implications.<sup>3</sup>

The U.S. manuals further go on to categorize LICs into four operational categories. They are insurgency and counterinsurgency, combatting terrorism, peacekeeping and peacetime contingency operations. The ambiguity lies in associating the definition with this categorization. Are peacekeeping and contingency operations conflicts, or military operations? Peacekeeping and contingency operations are not conflicts but operational options to resolve conflicts. Therefore, they are not low intensity conflicts as intended by



the definition. What is the difference between insurgency and terrorism? Terrorism is a tactic used in insurgencies and in all other forms of war. Although it satisfies the definition, terrorism is not a separate category but a part of insurgency. This leaves insurgency and counterinsurgency as the only category of LIC according to U.S. manual definition. But it is also not correct to consider only insurgency and counterinsurgency because there are other conflicts produced by other political groups that could be included as low intensity conflicts. Examples of these are the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) and the Moro National Liberation Movement (MNLF) in the Philippines. The RAM is a rightwing coup d'etat oriented group and the MNLF is a secessionist movement, both very different in nature from that of the communist insurgency.

This study hopes to contribute to a better understanding of low intensity conflict by analyzing the organization of the opposing forces. This is done by omitting the operational categories of peacekeeping and contingency operations, and considering terrorism as part of insurgency and counterinsurgency. This study therefore defines low intensity conflict as armed and unarmed confrontations and struggles between a state and opposing political groups within its territory either supported by a foreign country or not. The objectives of these opposing armed groups are political, economic, social or a combination of the three. It could be protracted or quick and it could be purely internal or could have

regional or global implications.

A study by the Congressional Research Service mentions sixty low intensity conflicts where the U.S. got involved from 1899 to 1990.<sup>4</sup> This list of sixty conflicts manifests the difference in the understanding of LIC between the U.S. government and the host countries. The first in the list was the Philippine-American war in 1899 and the last was the Panama operation in 1990. From the point of view of the Philippines, that war from 1899 to 1913 was an invasion by the Americans. The same is true of Panama from the point of view of General Manuel Noriega and some Panamanians.

#### The Purpose of this Study -

The purpose of this study is to discuss the nature of low intensity conflict, reduce its ambiguity, relate it to the new world order and discern how to adjust the national organization and the military force structure to deal with it effectively. This paper will discuss the environment under which these conflicts occur. To simplify the problem, this study presents the perspective of a Third World country, the Philippines, using its internal conflicts as examples that could be used to develop an effective organization to deal with them.

This study will focus primarily on the insurgency going on in the Philippines. The other conflicts brought about by the RAM and the MNLF will be discussed as supplements to that of the insurgency to emphasize how the organizations of these groups affect the nature of the conflicts.

The final objective and the main thesis of this paper is to discern what kind of military organization is effective to deal with low intensity conflict in a third world country like the Philippines. Is there a need to alter existing conventional forces to effectively deal with low intensity conflict? What is the role of special operations forces? Why do governments fail to contain conflicts?

## ENDNOTES

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3. Headquarters Department of the Army and Air Force, FM 100-20/AFP 3-20, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict, Washington D.C. 1990, p. 1-1  
The Joint Staff, Joint (test) Pub 3-07, Doctrine for Joint Operations in Low Intensity Conflict, Washington D.C. 18 October 1990, p. 2-2
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## THE CHALLENGE

### The Conflict Environment -

Low intensity conflicts usually occur in nations with unstable political systems, poor economic conditions, high unemployment, mass discontent and poverty. These conditions are heightened by rapid global changes and the inability or unwillingness of the society to cope with them. Despair is prevalent among dissatisfied people, a condition highly favorable to revolution.

When opposing political groups exploit the situation, the environment becomes ripe for armed conflict. The presence of strong and influential leadership gives direction to the movement. However, if the leaders are selfish, and motivated by personal fame, fortune and power, they often obscure the more important issues confronting the country.

The participation of outside powers worsens the environment. The entry of a foreign country broadens the magnitude of the problem causing the conflict to spill-over to neighboring nations whose interests are affected. Because the interests of the United States are spread worldwide, any conflict that occurs almost anywhere could affect and threaten its interests. Herein lies the possibility of involvement by the United States. However, in the post Cold-War era U.S. involvement will likely be less selective.

## The Philippine Society, a Typical Conflict Environment -

The Philippines is a developing country whose problems parallel those of many other Third World countries. Economic underdevelopment brought about by a myriad of factors is the main concern. An accumulated foreign debt of about 28 billion dollars, lack of sufficient industries to accommodate a growing labor force, inefficient agriculture, and the absence of capital and technology to develop export products for the world markets are the main reasons of this economic condition. How to develop solutions to resolve these problems is the prime concern of a government that is in itself developing politically. Political institutions and processes like elections, law making, judiciary, law enforcement, education, public information and civil service need to be streamlined. Even the armed forces needs to be professionalized. Added to these factors are the social, ethnic and religious diversities among people of different regions. All these factors add up to an environment very susceptible to low intensity conflict.

This difficult environment is not exactly of the people's own making, but it is more of an historical inheritance. This history dates from the colonial past where the country's resources were distributed only among the ruling colonizers and a small group of Filipinos who were considered the "illustrados".<sup>1</sup> This resulted in a society composed of a few rich and a large population of poor peasants.

This inequality that existed during the colonial years

continues to this day. There was a hope that these societal discrepancies could be corrected by the occupation of the Americans from 1899 to 1946. But forty seven years was too short to do the job and the Americans were apparently not so keen in correcting the situation. The elite group who are mostly descendants of the ilustrados and the Spaniards continue to dominate the political, economic, and social activities of the society. The large poor majority, the descendants of the exploited mass, remain poor and have little access to political power or economic growth.

This major portion of the population mostly comes from the tenants and laborers of the farms. The industrial base of the country is too small and underdeveloped to accommodate these poor masses, so, they either stay as they are on the farms or go to the cities and become unemployed. How to solve this problem has been the object of much discussion and conflict within society. The roots of discontent remains to this day.

#### The Roots of Discontent -

Three major reasons nourish the roots of discontent in the Philippine society today. First is the uneven distribution of income; second is the uneven share of political power; and the third reason is the absence of government control and services in most rural areas of the country. These three reasons of social disparity are used by the leaders of insurgency to justify revolution.

According to records of the Bureau of Census and Statistics, the income in the Philippines as of 1971 was unevenly distributed (see figure 1). In the chart, 54% of the total income of the year went to the top 20% of families, 21% went to the second 20% of families and the remaining 25% of the total income was shared by a large 60% of the poor population.<sup>2</sup> This indicates a wide gap between the haves and the have-nots --perhaps three out of five live in poverty, one living just enough and the other one living luxuriously. These figures did not change much from 1971 to the time Marcos was ousted in 1986. Neither have they changed for the better from 1986 to the present.

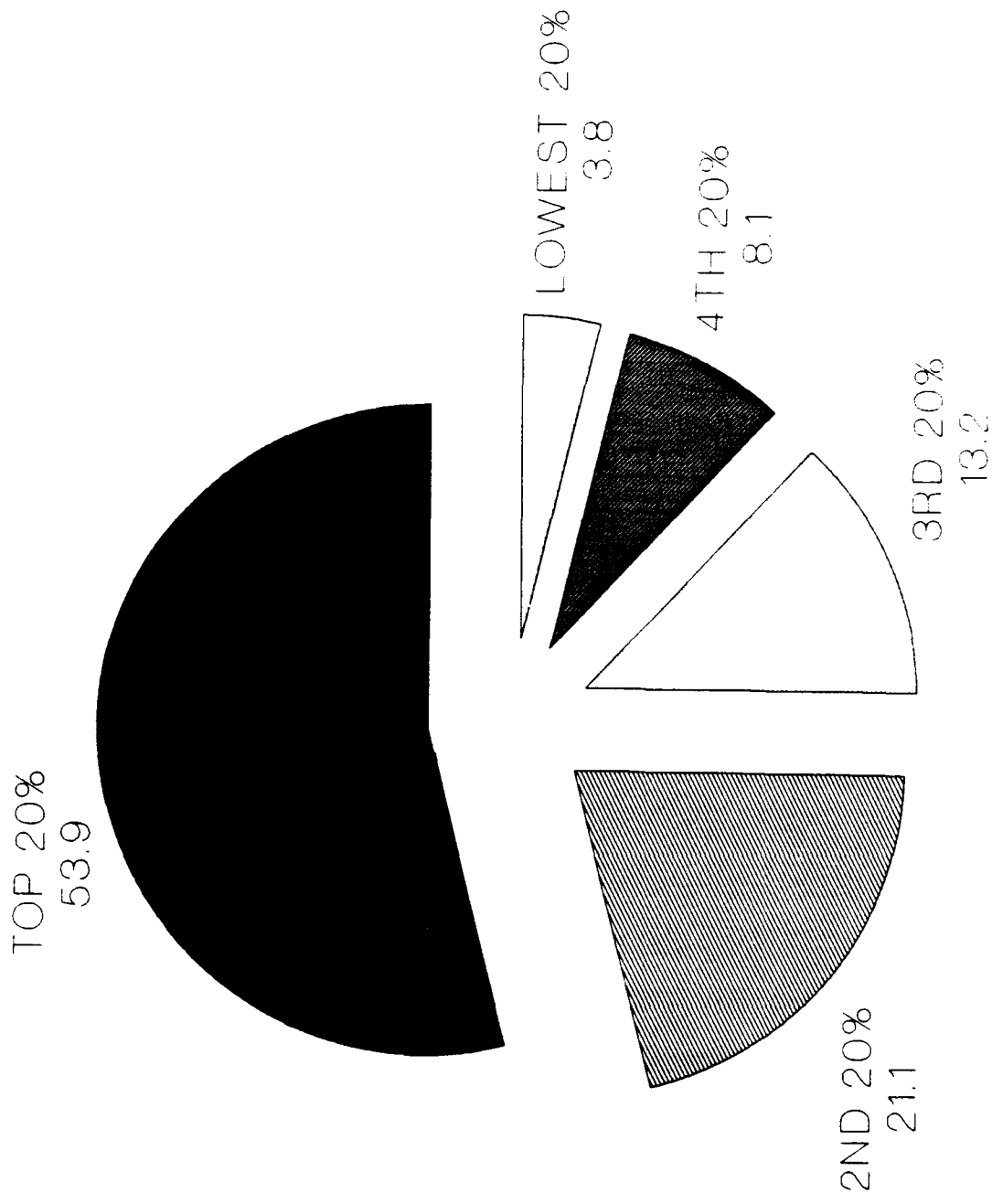
There are glittering enclaves in Manila, but seventy per cent of Filipinos live in the countryside; tenant farmers who own nothing more valuable than a carabao (water buffalo), day laborers with an average daily wage of \$1.50, and the totally unemployed living on handouts and a diet of root crops. Behind the exterior charm of Manila's modernity are more than 200 communities of squatters, landless immigrants living in hovels and searching garbage for food. Nowhere in Asia is the contrast between the rich and the poor more vivid.<sup>3</sup>

These economic indicators are compounded by a political system of similar structure, the rich controlling most if not all of the political power of the country. The political system has been traditionally dominated by a small, wealthy elite, consisting of large landholders and a few powerful industrial and commercial entrepreneurs, and their lawyers. Other elements of



# FIGURE 1

## PHIL INCOME DISTRIBUTION, 1971



the population have, in comparison, few channels through which they can influence the workings or policy of government.<sup>4</sup>

The major political parties (Nacionalista and Liberal), ideologically identical and led by the elite are loose coalitions of politicians allied for the moment in pursuit of power and do not present the electorate with a clear choice in alternative programs.<sup>5</sup> This political situation has existed from post independence up to the Martial Law period (1946 - 1972). Martial Law aggravated the problem because political power was retained by only one party, the New society Movement (Kilusang Bagong Lipunan) led by Ferdinand Marcos. The ouster of Marcos in 1986 saw the appearance of another coalition of parties mostly the opposition groups during the Marcos rule. They formed the Strength of Democratic Philippines (Lakas Ng Demokratikong Pilipino) which presently carries the incumbent political power under the leadership of Corazon Aquino. Most, if not all, the members of this new party in power belong to the rich and elite families of the Philippines.

William Chapman, author of Inside the Philippine Revolution observed that the Philippines displayed one more enduring reality. This was its utter lawlessness and its remoteness from the normal workings of government. The rural Philippines existed in a kind of civic vacuum where the government's writ did not run and public services are minimal. Armed bandit gangs moved about the hills unhampered, stealing cattle, household goods, and crops. If a farmer had protection, it was because he and his

friends provided it in vigilante patrols. Welfare and other services came rarely and if they came at all they were manipulated for partisan uses by local politicians. Much of the Philippines, especially Mindanao, simply seemed not a part of a functioning social system.<sup>6</sup> Not many Filipinos can dispute this observation from a foreign writer.

These three factors, economic disparity, unequal access to political power and absence of government in the rural areas are the most effective tools for the insurgents to fan the embers of social revolution. They identified these three issues to the people in the more popular terms of Feudalism, U.S. Imperialism, and Bureaucrat Capitalism. The feudal lords (big landowners) dominate the political power, U.S. Imperialism brought about the economic underdevelopment of the country, and Bureaucrat Capitalism caused the large gap between the rich and the poor.

U.S. Imperialism continues to dominate the arguments of the insurgents in a sense that it is believed to be the root cause of all the economic and political difficulties of the country. They continue to cite the Payne-Aldrich act of 1909, and the Philippine Trade act of 1946. Both were U.S. laws that ensured the continuous access to Philippine markets of U.S. consumer goods without tariff and the dependence of Philippine agricultural and mineral products to the U.S market. The most humiliating feature of the trade act was the parity rights of the Americans in the Philippines. This act declared that American entrepreneurs would enjoy the same rights as the Filipinos in

developing and exploiting all timber, mineral, and agricultural lands and would be similarly entitled to own and operate public utilities.<sup>7</sup>

The effects of these U.S. laws are still felt to this day. Out of the top 200 corporations in the Philippines today, 47 are U.S. corporations. These 47 corporations earned 36% of the total income of the top 200 corporations in 1971 and owned 28% of the total assets.<sup>8</sup> The only way to break the economic underdevelopment and bring a better life to the Filipino people, the insurgents argue, is to stop the three evils of Philippine society; Feudalism, Imperialism and Bureaucrat Capitalism. For a Filipino in extreme state of poverty, there is no better alternative than to try what the communists are proposing, regardless of what it is.

After the second world war, three threats developed against the existing government; the first challenge came from the Philippine communists. Their main issue was land reform and their objective was distribution of land to the landless tenants. The first uprising led by the communist party occurred only in the central plains of the island of Luzon after the second World War. This initial uprising of the communists was defeated in 1955 by President Ramon Magsaysay with the help of the U.S. government. But in 1968, a reorganized communist party was founded and rekindled the revolution. Another threat group which erupted in the late 1960's was the Moro National Liberation Front, a secessionist movement whose aim is the independence of thirteen

provinces where most of the Muslim population is located. The latest threat emerged in 1985 from among the ranks of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. It calls itself the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM). It was instrumental in leading the revolt against the government of Ferdinand Marcos which resulted in Marcos' ouster and the takeover of power by Corazon Aquino. However, it later rebelled against the Aquino government because of lingering discontent. RAM continues to be a threat to the government up to this time.

These three threat groups therefore constitute the opposing political forces in Philippine society that are initiating low intensity conflicts in the Philippines. They are the political groups that continue to fan the seeds of discontent and they pose a formidable and well organized political-military challenge to the incumbent government.

Communist insurgents who launched their "People's War" in 1968 pose the most serious threat.<sup>9</sup> The issues upon which their revolution is based are; widespread poverty, unemployment, labor exploitation and economic underdevelopment. They blame the government for inefficiency, corruption, crime and violence.

The Communists went to the countryside to educate the people about the reasons behind their sorry conditions. They used this as part of their strategy to win the support and sympathy of the people. They used the Marxist-Leninist-Mao Tze Tung thought as the political line to justify the rationale of armed revolution. The elite of society will never relinquish political power in a

peaceful way, they said. The only way is to grab power through the barrel of the gun.

This political line is very appealing and reasonable to the ordinary person. For a desperately poor individual, there is nothing to lose by joining the communist revolutionary movement. The communists were and still are confident of victory because of this. They were waiting for the right time for a general uprising which they predicted to happen as early as the middle of the 70's. And despite the increasing economic problems of the country, that general uprising has not taken off. Why?

There are positive factors within the Philippine society that are not often discussed but are significant to the question of why the Communists seem unable to create that critical point for a general uprising. The psycho-social composition of the individual Filipino has enabled him and his family to survive difficulties and continue to hope for better times, and hence refuse to partake of unnecessary violence. The time molded traditions of industry, patience, close family ties, respect for elders and self sacrifice prevented most Filipinos from embarking on a violent revolution. Their interest is more on the individual survival of their families and clans than the national objectives which to them are not of their concern.

The educational system that was handed down by the United States is also a major contributing factor to the viability of Philippine society. Because of this educational system, the Philippines has attained one of the highest literacy rates of

Asia. It has a 90% literacy rate as of 1991.<sup>10</sup> The universities which are mostly located in Manila have turned out numerous graduates many of whom come from the poor sectors of the country. Engineers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, nurses, accountants, mechanics and electricians are abundant. Lots of graduates from the Philippine educational system are warmly received in other countries. Many can be found employed in the Middle East, Europe, Africa and even in the United States.

Another factor of strength is clannishness and fierce loyalty to individuals. This factor makes it difficult to organize a widespread activity like a nationwide revolution. The different regions populated by divergent ethnic groups are difficult to unite into a single purpose. Although this is considered a weakness and liability towards nation building, this factor helped prevent the insurgents from mounting a large scale uprising.

Another unique Filipino trait is the "Utang na Loob" or obligation to return a favor. This trait encourages the politics of patronage where loyalties are often decided by doleouts from political leaders instead of an ideology. Because of the doleouts, the greater masses of the people become docile followers of the patron.

These factors and traits of the people enabled them to survive over the years without resorting to large scale violence. But these same traits also serve as a negative factor towards political and economic development as promised by the free

enterprise system and the individual freedoms guaranteed by the democratic system of government. Clannishness is in contrast to the fierce individualism of a free market system. Loyalty to individuals is in contrast to the loyalty to institutions which is critical in a workable democracy. The protected family way of life is in contrast to the principles of entrepreneurship which requires the need to explore and move to unfamiliar grounds. These contradictions within the Filipino serve both as brakes and accelerators to the development of the country. It is creating a push and pull effect that could be a possible explanation why the insurgency has neither been won nor lost.

Both insurgents and the government maintain a posture of winning, a situation which is very frustrating to the ordinary citizen as well as to the leaders of the government and the insurgents. How can this impasse be solved? Can an effective organization help? What kind of organization can be effective? One possible way to approach the problem is to analyze the insurgent organization and find out how and why it is able to continue in spite of the odds.

#### The Philippine Insurgents -

There are three kinds of insurgencies being waged in the Philippines today. They include the communist inspired insurgency of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM). According to current assessments, the first poses



the greater threat while the second is considered moribund. The third insurgent group, RAM, are military adventurists who have neither an effective political objective nor the political machinery to carry out their aims. The Armed Forces of the Philippines considers RAM a threat to national security more out of embarrassment than reality. This group will be cited occasionally to emphasize the thesis that organization and political acceptability are paramount to a revolutionary movement.

Since 1898, the Philippines has been the setting of many conflicts. The previously stated study by the U.S. Congressional Research Service reveals that there were five LICs in the Philippines that the U.S. was involved in during the period from 1899 to 1986. The first one was the Philippine-American War from 1899 to 1913. The second was the guerilla resistance movement against the Japanese occupation forces from 1942 to 1945. The third was the insurgency launched by the Soviet leaning Communist party from 1946 to 1955. The fourth was the insurgency launched by the reorganized Mao Tze Tung oriented Communist party in 1968 and still on-going. And the last was the coup d'etat against Marcos in 1986, led by the RAM.<sup>11</sup>

The Philippines continues to endure ongoing conflicts that show every indication of continuing into the future. This is because the society is full of the elements of conflict that are extremely difficult to remove. To further understand the Philippine conflict environment, this study presents an

historical view of the insurgency waged by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), its military arm known as the New People's Army (NPA), and its political arm known as the National Democratic Front (NDF).

#### The People's War of the CPP/NPA/NDF -

The insurgency started in December 26, 1968 when eleven radicals met secretly in Pangasinan, Island of Luzon, to found the new Communist Party of the Philippines.<sup>12</sup> Its military arm, the New People's Army (NPA), was formed in March the following year. The third arm, the National Democratic Front (NDF), followed much later after martial law was declared by President Marcos in 1972. By the middle of 1971 the insurgency became a serious concern of the government of Ferdinand Marcos. He used the concern to justify his proclamation of martial law in September of 1972. His official announcement stated that he made that move to save the republic and reform society.

The Marcos administration was successful during the initial years of that regime. But economic difficulties and government mismanagement enabled the insurgents not only to survive but to expand. This was aggravated by the rise of the secessionist movement in Mindanao in 1973. By 1984 the official estimate of the NPA strength was 10,000 to 12,000.<sup>13</sup> The CPP/NPA claimed a strength of 20,000 the previous year of 1983. Apparently the insurgents were able to expand from one single guerilla base in 1969 to an active presence in 62 of the 72 provinces in fifteen

years by the end of 1984.<sup>14</sup>

What enabled them to grow and expand even in the absence of foreign support? The Marxist-Leninist theory and application of a popular revolution based on an effective organization was the model of the Philippine insurgents. The important point to discuss is the way they were able to organize and mobilize people, and not the Marxist socialist form of government which already has been discredited. A good view of effective organization is what Lenin did in leading the successful takeover of political power in Russia in 1917. This could be traced back to the start of insurgent wars in Europe in the early 19th century.

Insurgency started in Spain in the early 19th century (1808-1814). The Spaniards conducted a defensive guerrilla warfare to defend their homeland against Napoleonic forces.<sup>15</sup> Then in 1871, the French launched an unsuccessful uprising against the Napoleonic regime using economic ruin and national humiliation as the motivation. This French uprising, popularly known as the Paris Commune of 1871, served as the start of world proletarian revolutions. The studies of Marx and Engels over this incident were the basis of Lenin's actions in leading the Bolsheviks to a successful takeover of Russia in October 25, 1917.<sup>16</sup>

Because of his role in the successful revolution, Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov, better known by his adopted name Nikolai Lenin, was placed at the head of government. What was the reason for his success? It was his ability to translate theory into practice by

using effective organization to mobilize people.<sup>17</sup> Lenin maintained that a political organ is necessary to lead a political movement. This gave rise to the Communist Party. Then he organized a political machinery to win the minds of the people. This machinery was made of a newspaper (ISKRA), and the front organizations composed of political, economic, social, and cultural sectors, all combined to compete with the traditional institutions.

The army, the force that carried the armed revolution, evolved very easily as a consequence of the first two. The result was a historic toppling of the Russian Czar, an action that paved the way for other Communist revolutions around the world. Note that the success of Lenin seems to have been derived from the combination of a political organization (party), people's organization (united front), and an army. This is equivalent to Clausewitz' trinity of war which is comprised of government (political party), people (united front), and the army.<sup>18</sup>

The Philippine insurgent force patterned its organization almost exactly after what Lenin did, albeit with doctrinal additions from the thoughts of Mao Tze Tung. This is why the Philippine insurgents called their fighting doctrine as "Marxist-Leninist-Mao Tze Tung Thought" (MLMTTT). They even adopted it as part of their official name, CPP-MLMTTT, during their founding in December 26, 1968.<sup>19</sup>

Many of the other insurgencies of the world have a similar pattern of organization, with very slight modifications. Mao Tze

Tung of China believed that the elements of victory are (1) the party (2) mass support (3) an army and (4) rural revolutionary bases. Vo Nguyen Giap of Vietnam believed that the success is attributed to (1) leadership of the party (2) national united front (3) people's army, and (4) the people.<sup>20</sup>

The Latin American version popularly espoused by Che Guevara has a different view. Guevara stressed the military over the political organization. He merged the political leadership with the military commander. It violated the theory of Clausewitz about the supremacy of the political leadership and the conduct of war being an extension of political objectives. Che Guevarra paid dearly for not following Clausewitz' theory. He failed miserably in Bolivia where he also met his death. Likewise all the insurgencies of Latin America failed except Cuba and Nicaragua.<sup>21</sup>

The founders of the CPP/NPA/NDF learned from the lessons of other countries that organization is a big factor for success. The organization of this insurgent force is a blend of Clausewitz, Lenin and Mao Tze Tung. These are the political party providing the leadership, the armed component providing the necessary force and the front organizations uniting all revolutionary forces into one. Each of these three will be thoroughly studied in the following discussions.

## The Political Party -

The Communist Party of the Philippines, as the political organ, serves as the vanguard of the revolutionary movement. This party is led by a central committee composed of senior members elected from a national congress. The political objectives, the strategy, and the means to attain them are all formulated and decided by the Central Committee.

The party is designed to be mass based. Its basic organization is the party branch, which consists of two or more members. Branches are organized in the communities, plantations, factories, residential districts, schools, offices, and practically any other place where the broad masses of the people are residing or working.

When three or more party branches develop, a section is organized. Three or more sections form a district (usually coinciding with the geographical area of a province). If the province has a sufficient number of party members, a provincial party committee is formed. The provincial party committees form a regional party committee. And the last of the chain is the central committee. The organization is designed to reach the remotest areas and to establish control at all levels.

Planning is centralized at the central committee level but the execution of policies is decentralized to the lower party levels. The regional level of the party is given full autonomy in the execution of party doctrines in accordance with broad policies made by the central committee during periodic plenums.

Mainly because of the leadership of this grassroots political party, the insurgency managed to expand nationwide within the period 1969 to 1981. In 1981, after martial law was lifted, the central committee announced in its 8th plenum (held January 1981) that the armed struggle reached the advanced substage of the strategic defensive.<sup>22</sup> This meant that the insurgents were about to enter the second phase of insurgency which is strategic stalemate.

In 1985, just before the ousting of President Marcos, Philippine society became extremely polarized. The insurgents took advantage of this situation and maximized their organizational and recruitment activities. In the process they were able to reach a high point of their revolutionary struggle. The party revealed a membership of 28,000.<sup>23</sup>

#### The Armed Component, The New Peoples Army (NPA) -

The insurgents believe that the conditions existing in the country require an armed struggle to ensure victory. The building and development of the NPA is then considered as one of the main tools of the insurgency. The growth of the NPA followed that of the party. Because of the deteriorating socio-economic conditions of the environment, membership in the armed group was not a problem. Accounts from party leaders state that immediately after martial law was declared an exodus of disgruntled youth volunteered for the NPA. Most of them did so because of fear that

their names were on the wanted list of the military. Many were members of the radical youth organization "Kabataang Makabayan" patriotic youth.

The NPA is composed of five fighting units. They are: (1) Regular Mobile Forces, (2) Local Guerilla Units, (3) Armed City Partisan, (4) Sparrow Units, and (5) Barrio Militia Units.<sup>24</sup> The Regular Mobile Force is patterned after the conventional organizations of armies. Its smallest unit is the squad (5-10 men). This is followed by the platoon (2-3 squads), then a company (2-3 platoons), battalion (2-3 companies), regiments (2-3 battalions), divisions (2-3 regiments). Divisions and regiments however are only in their planning stage. As of 1991 the insurgents could only form up to company sized units with maximum number of 150 men, and only on very rare occasions.

The command structure of the NPA starts from the National Operational Command (NOC) which exercises leadership of all NPA units nationwide. This NOC is a collective leadership organization composed of the commander-in-chief, his deputy commander, and the regional commanders and their deputies.<sup>25</sup> The next level of command is the Regional Operational Command. This is followed by the Provincial Operational Command, and the last is the District Operational Command. Each level of command is supported by a staff which is organized into departments. These are: (1) political department, (2) personnel and training department, (3) intelligence department and (4) logistics department.



The NPA utilizes four kinds of special operations forces. The Local Guerrilla Units are composed of full time guerrillas operating in a locality under the command and leadership of the district party committee. They serve as support elements of the regular mobile force. There are also Armed City Partisans which are small fighting units in urban areas. Each unit is composed of 3-5 members. The size is flexible depending on the mission. The partisans meet only when they are given specific missions, otherwise they avoid being together.

The Sparrow Units are special assassination squads usually deployed in the countryside. The sparrows are always intact when operating. They are based in the houses of sympathizers. Sparrows also perform political and organizational work inside their area of jurisdiction. The missions of both the sparrow and the partisans are assassinations, seizure of military equipment, sabotage and intelligence. Finally, there are Barrio Militia Units that are composed of the residents of the community who are citizens by day and guerrillas by night. They are usually the young men of the barrio, who are being trained for future recruitment to the regular NPA force. Their missions are usually defensive which could turn into active punishment of informers, criminal elements, and enemies of the movement. They also serve as intelligence units, and they compose the reserve elements of the insurgency. As of 1985 the estimated overall strength of these NPA forces was 25,642. <sup>26</sup>

The United Front, The National Democratic Front (NDF) -

Like all modern guerilla wars, the one in the Philippines is a political-military show, a struggle more for popular support than turf, and it is on the political side that the real victories are being won. This is what William Chapman said in his book Inside the Philippine Revolution. He further stated that the agent of the insurgent's success in the Philippines was the NDF.<sup>27</sup> This is the organization that is trying to unite the people towards a common political goal.

During the second plenum of the central committee in 1971, a preparatory commission of the NDF was established.<sup>28</sup> Prior to this date the propaganda and united front efforts were done by the party. This preparatory commission was tasked to develop the unity, cooperation and coordination of various progressive and nationalist organizations nationwide.

It was in 1973 that the NDF's responsibilities were clarified. The NDF worked for the mobilization of mass organizations. Among the first sectoral mass organizations organized were:

- Patriotic Youth (Kabataang Makabayan)
- Patriotic Movement of Modern Women (Makabayang Kilusan Ng Bagong Kababaihan)
- Patriotic Unity for Health (Makabayang Samahan Pangkalusugan)
- Organization of Patriotic Teachers (Katipunan Ng Mga Gurong Makabayan)
- Organization of United Farmers (Katipunan Ng Samahang Magsasaka)
- National Movement of Farmers (Pambansang Kilusang Magbubukid)
- Revolutionary Movement of Fishermen (Revolutionaryong Kilusan Ng Mga Mangingisda)
- Christians for National Liberation

Many NDF organizations followed as the NDF program was vigorously carried out. The most popular of which is the May First Movement (Kilusang Mayo Uno). In 1982, the NDF grew into a full blown national united front organization. It published a draft program which consisted of twelve points primarily calling for the unity of all parties, groups, organizations, and political forces; participation in toppling the Marcos administration; and establishment of a coalition government. All of this organizational activity paid off in terms of NDF growth. By 1986, the NDF strength was estimated to be one million with 50,000 full time active members.<sup>29</sup> Its ranks include thousands of farmers, workers, teachers, priests, nuns, fishermen, office workers, students and civil servants.

While the NDF's membership is open to all Filipinos, and its propaganda stresses nationalism and patriotism, the CPP/NDF leadership and organization is dominated by experienced Communist cadres.

The combination of the CPP/NPA/NDF organizations has produced a highly potent revolutionary insurgent force that still poses a strong challenge to the government of the Philippines. The following is the assessment of the Armed Forces of the Philippines on the CPP/NPA/NDF:

In 1991 our assessment is that CPP/NPA/NDF efforts will be concentrated on the escalation of guerilla warfare in the countryside, the instigation of the people to stage more frequent and widespread mass protest activities and the renewed conduct of special urban partisan warfare. Efforts to enhance the political struggle will likewise be pursued in selected urban centers nationwide. The party is also expected to mobilize its legal cadres and front

organizations to exert pressure on the government to accept talks for a negotiated political settlement of the insurgency conflict, and thus open another front for its struggle.<sup>30</sup>

Interestingly enough, the CPP/NPA/NDF is almost an exact model of the Clausewitz' trinity of government, army, and people- a deadly combination to fight any kind of war. What makes it different in LIC is that the war is being fought by the same people that make up the country. The group that wins the loyalty and allegiance of the majority of the people becomes the obvious and inevitable winner. It will be a fight of ideologies and political and economic systems, a fight for the people's will. The role of organization in this fight is vital. The one with an effective organization, regardless of the ideology may be able to gain the advantage of mobilizing people to its side. For the government, which considers itself legitimate, an effective organization is critically necessary.

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) -

The Moro National Liberation Front is a secessionist movement born out of the conflicts of ethnic and religious differences among the inhabitants of the island of Mindanao in the southern part of the Philippine archipelago. It became a national security concern in 1973 when it launched armed attacks against government forces hoping to gain control of areas they consider as moro territory.

This is another insurgent force organized along the same pattern as the CPP/NPA/NDF. One slight difference is that this

insurgent group has only two distinct organizations compared to three of the Communists. These two are the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Bangsa Moro Army (BMA). It is trying to assert the existence of the third, the Bangsa Moro Republic, but there is no semblance of difference from the first two because of the same leadership personalities. By coincidence, both the founders of the CPP and MNLF were professors in the University of the Philippines, and were reputed to be close friends and associates. Jose Maria Sison founded the CPP and Nur Misuari the MNLF.

The MNLF is already losing ground and credibility among its followers. One reason is its difficulty in propagating its objective of secession among the Muslim population. Another reason is the disunity among the different tribes. The third reason is the non-availability of support from its traditional supporters from the Islamic countries of the Middle East. But the main reason is its weak organization. The leaders of the movement were not able to distinguish the different roles of the political organ, the armed group, and the people's united front. The MNLF and the BMA are one and the same thing with the same leaders and personalities.

Because of faulty organization, they were not able to sell their political objectives to their people. They lacked the machinery to mobilize the muslims to their cause. Their political moves and propaganda efforts were directed to an outside audience rather than inside towards the people. Their political lines were

to discredit the Philippine government with the main purpose of obtaining support from outside forces.

The above analysis is consistent with the latest AFP assessment of the MNLF:

Unless the MNLF and the MILF resolve their problems, their overall capability as a movement is expected to further decline. Their options in the near term are limited to committing common crimes for subsistence, threatening a resumption of hostilities, and engaging in diplomatic efforts to gain more support from OIC member countries. Arab and Muslim nations which supported the multi-national force in the Middle East will probably be reluctant to extend assistance to the MNLF in view of the latter's pro Iraqi stance during the gulf war. The MNLF campaign for membership in the OIC may likewise be seriously be jeopardized.<sup>31</sup>

The Reform The Armed Forces Movement (RAM) -

The RAM is a patriotic group within the military organization born out of the frustrations in witnessing the corruption and inefficiency of the AFP during the twenty year regime of Ferdinand Marcos. Its concern about the AFP expanded outside towards the whole government as it progressed in its movement. RAM despaired over the seemingly hopeless situation of the ordinary people and the members took it upon themselves to initiate corrective actions. It did not even know how to start except to meet and talk about reform as classmates and alumni of the Philippine Military Academy.

RAM started as the Reform the Armed Forces Movement. It recently changed its name to Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabayan (Revolutionary Patriotic Alliance). This group attempted two major coup d'etat against the government of Corazon Aquino, one

in August 1987 and the other in December 1989.

How RAM is organized is not clear. It does not have a political party and it does not seem to have a political agenda. RAM also does not have an organized army. Its apparent aim is to subvert the members of the AFP and hope for deserters to join them. This is a kind of insurgent organization which was destined to fail even from the beginning. RAM was almost successful in their 1989 attempt merely because they knew the weaknesses of the AFP. But it could have created more trouble with victory because of the absence of a political agenda. In fact, if RAM came to power it might have created a fascist military regime. The AFP assessment as of 1991 is that " the RAM will continue to weaken as a threat to topple the government before 1992."<sup>32</sup>

The three sources of internal conflict in the Philippines are manifestations of the growing pains of a young and developing democratic country. It shows the dynamics of different ideas and methods of trying to achieve the objectives of these ideas. But the conflicts brought about by these groups are causing significant damage in terms of lives and properties. It also shows the role of effective organization in bringing forth a movement where people are involved. The Communist insurgents who have the best organization among the three seem to have the more dangerous threat against the established government. The other two are no longer seen as a serious threat because of weak organization.

Therefore, considering the challenge posed by the Communist

insurgents, it is useful to look into the CPP/NPA/NDF organization in order to develop more effective ways of dealing with them. Perhaps the best way to defeat this communist threat is to develop an organizational response that is superior to the CPP/NPA/NDF organizational challenge.



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## ORGANIZING A SUCCESSFUL RESPONSE

### Imperatives for Success -

Defining and understanding the imperatives for success is necessary to organize and develop an effective response to insurgency. From the point of view of the incumbent government what are these imperatives for winning the conflict?

There are a lot of imperatives if the environment of a Third World country is considered. The list includes all the solutions of the problems in that society. But in the actual world of realities, it is impractical to suggest that the effective way to defeat the insurgents is to eliminate all of these problems. Economic underdevelopment, weak institutions, widespread poverty, government corruption and inefficiency, the wide gap between rich and poor sectors of society, high prices, unemployment, the care of the sick and elderly, crime and violence are all endemic problems of any society including the more developed and wealthier countries. To say that the solution to insurgency is to solve all of these problems is unrealistic. Any government with or without an insurgency has as its objective the solution of these problems. A successful response needs only a credible plan and organization to mobilize the population towards a unified counterinsurgency effort.

The imperatives therefore for a successful prosecution of an insurgency are not to solve all social problems but to show to the people that the existing government has the better approach

and method of solving these problems. This is why the insurgency conflict is considered the battle of propaganda. It is a fight for the hearts, minds and loyalties of the people of the country. The military engagements between the insurgents and the government forces are secondary to the greater and broader engagements of the diverging political approaches to the same problems.

How can the battle for human minds and loyalties be won? This is where the imperatives for success are defined. The imperatives must be derived from the development, education and awareness of population, and from the sincerity, perseverance and dedication of the organization and leadership of the counterinsurgency forces that are fighting the insurgents.

The U.S. Army and Air Force manual FM 100-20/AFP 3-20 mentions five imperatives for the success of counterinsurgency operation. They are; political dominance, unity of effort, legitimacy, adaptability, and perseverance.<sup>1</sup> From the point of view of the U.S. LIC operations, these are highly valid imperatives for success. But there are a lot more from the perspective of a third world country like the Philippines.

The battle for the hearts and minds of the people is won by the collective and synchronized efforts of the government, army and people. The imperatives for success therefore come from the variables involving the legitimacy and credibility of government, the professionalism of the army and the education and awareness of the people. They are: 1. strong and effective leadership 2.

sovereign, independent and sincere counterinsurgency policy 3. effective and just laws 4. unified effort between government , army and people 5. a professional army and police 6. effective intelligence and 7. education and awareness of the people.

National cohesion is one of the most important ingredients of nationhood. The people should have similar values, traditions and culture or the willingness to live together despite the differences. They should possess the singleness of purpose to live together as one people. This can be done only with strong and effective leadership. The leader must unite the different political groups with diverging objectives into one single nation, even as the insurgents try to unite what they perceive as the oppressed and neglected sector.

When a segment of its people rises in arms, the only way to defeat it is to organize the remainder of the people to cooperate and unify with the government and its army. There must be a unified effort among the people, army and government to reject this rebellious segment in order to preserve the nation as one single country. It is necessary to unite. Without this imperative, counterinsurgency is difficult.

Internal conflicts are best resolved by the people who live in that country. A sovereign and independent policy is necessary to remain credible to the people. Outside dependence will generate disrespect from the people and loss of initiative among the leaders. In extreme cases, outside assistance may come in the form of material and finance, but never in policy making and

decisions as to how the conflict is to be prosecuted. This was the tragic mistake of the South Vietnamese government in its loss against the North.

The army and the police are the instruments of political power wielded by the chief executive of the land. Poorly trained and undisciplined army and police are definitely counterproductive forces. They create more problems than they solve. The professionalization of these instruments is therefore a necessary imperative for the success of the counterinsurgency.

The education and awareness of the issues and conflicts by all sectors of society is required. The army, police, the leadership, the civil servants and the people should be aware of the issues and conflicts and the efforts to deal with them. They should know and understand the respective roles that they have to play in the counterinsurgency campaign. The people need to be educated that the insurgents are the enemies of the state and that their cooperation is needed to expose and defeat them.

A working democracy implies that the laws of the land are the true representation of the will of the people. Therefore the people should respect, obey and help in the enforcement in order to have a just and orderly society. The law should be used to promote the common good. It should not be used to protect and shield its enemies. There should be sufficient and just laws to deal with the insurgents to enable and legitimize the police and the military to effectively deal with them.

The instruments and the leaders who are given the duty and

responsibility to fight the insurgents are accountable to the people. Laws and regulations and the judicial system to enforce them should be established to ensure that they are done. The government and the army must have a high degree of respect and credibility from the people to be effective. Undisciplined, corrupt and inefficient personnel should not be allowed to stay in the service. This responsibility and accountability is imperative to success.

An intelligence service is needed by the national leadership to know the nature, character, leadership, intentions and capabilities of the insurgent force. This intelligence service must be directed and controlled at the national level and the products of which are the ingredients in the formulation of policies and strategies as well as the operational plans to be used against the insurgent force. Like all the others, intelligence is an imperative to counterinsurgency success.

The insurgents usually fight their war as underdogs. They do not have the heavy conventional forces to match those of the government forces. What they use are merely weapons of the mind like ideology, deception, propaganda and will to fight. Their main fighting tactic is guerrilla warfare which relies mainly on native resources and the inherent talents of their fighters. Their strategy is geared towards winning the hearts and minds of the population. The way to defeat them is to disarm them of these tools. The use of military operations therefore becomes secondary and supportive. The primary effort (which is the battle of the

minds) should be given to the civilian sector of government.

These imperatives for success are now used to determine what kind of organization is needed. In the Philippine case, the need to reexamine its counterinsurgency organization arises from the seeming difficulty of attaining progress despite the excellent plans and strategies of the government. Why do governments fail? Are there flaws in the organization that cause difficulties? If so what are they?

#### Organizational Flaws -

A good organization provides direction and control , responsibility and accountability, and motivation for action. The national leadership provides direction, control and the instruments of leadership. The army and bureaucracy are given the responsibility and accountability. And finally the people are well motivated to act and cooperate with the policies of government. These are the ingredients of a good organization that can deal effectively with insurgency. It is an ideal union of the three main elements of political power- the government, the army and the people.

The validity of this thesis is illustrated by the cases of Vietnam and the former Soviet Union. In Vietnam, the leadership of the South Vietnamese government did not assert its direction and control over its organization. It lost the initiative because the overall counterinsurgency effort was directed and controlled by a foreign power, the United States. The South Vietnamese army



was not responsible and accountable for the military campaign because the U.S. forces already assumed the responsibility. And the people of South Vietnam were not motivated to act because there was no clear direction and no credibility from the leaders.

In the case of the Soviet Union, the leadership was overly strong and over centralized. It stifled the initiative of lower level leaders. The army and the bureaucracy were responsible and accountable, but rigid and inflexible. The leadership and its instruments of power may have been very effective for some time, but they did not allow the people to act according to democratic principles of freedom and liberty. The people's motivation to act in unison with the government was lost. What happened was a discordant society where the government direction was in opposition to that of its people, without even being aware of it for a long time.

The lesson learned in both cases is that national cohesion is the decisive factor in counterinsurgency. There must be a singleness of purpose and direction between the government, the army and its people.

#### The Philippine Government's Strategy and Organization -

The Philippine government's counterinsurgency strategy is contained in President Aquino's speeches upon assumption of power in February 1986. She declared a ceasefire and a policy of reconciliation with all opposition groups of the country including the communist insurgents. She reversed this policy into

an all out war in 1987 when the ceasefire was terminated and the communists resumed their violent offensives against government forces.<sup>2</sup> Aside from these two policy announcements, there were no other national command guidance or direction. Neither is there any national organization to deal with the insurgency.

President Aquino turned to the traditional agency that carries the brunt of the counterinsurgency which is the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The President knew that the solution to the insurgency was more than the application of military force, but there is no other government agency to lead the civilian effort in addressing the root causes of the problem. In her search for such an organization she created the Peace and Order Council (POC) at the national and local levels of government. This council is designed more to coordinate rather than to plan or implement a national effort. Then she created the National Reconciliation and Development Program (NRDP). This program is designed to attract defectors from the insurgent movement by giving promises of amnesty and economic rehabilitation.

The Armed Forces developed the "War of Quick Resolution" strategy in 1988 in response to the President's policy of all out war. This strategy is executed by a campaign plan "Net Trap" (Lambat Bitag) with an objective to seize strategic victory over the insurgents by 1992.<sup>3</sup> This campaign plan is designed to destroy the insurgent organization by using both military operations as well as civil-military cooperation for economic

development. This plan has four phases; (1) Clearing Phase (2) Holding Phase (3) Consolidation Phase and (4) Development Phase. The first two phases are military missions while the last two are civilian functions. The plan assumes that the civilian local government will perform the two civilian functions mentioned in the plan. What is not clear is how the military commanders link up with civil government in the execution of the consolidation and development phases.

The Philippine government's counterinsurgency organization has some flaws that needs to be corrected. The direction and control from the national leadership lacks focus. Although the President has expressed in general terms the direction of the counterinsurgency, the instruments for implementation cannot translate it into a unified effort. President Corazon Aquino's policy of ceasefire and negotiations with the communist leadership was not agreeable to the military. The Defense Department including the military organization argued vigorously against this policy. They claimed that the policy of negotiating with the Communists was merely strenghtening the insurgency. The ceasefire and the negotiations were terminated even before the deadline was reached, and hostilities resumed with even more vigor than before.

Regardless of the merits of both sides, this disunity between the leader and her instruments reveal a flawed organization. The defense department and the military organization can make a strong point in advising the President,

but should not make any opposition after the decision is made. Without specific direction from the commander-in-Chief, the military does not assume on its own a counterinsurgency campaign. Thus when the AFP launched its campaign plan "Lambat Bitag" (Net Trap), its success was immediately jeopardized. Since it is its own campaign, the AFP is left alone to pursue its objectives. Other government agencies that were supposed to implement some phases of the campaign are not accountable to do so because there is no direction from the highest national authority.

The people are always aware of the efforts made by government leaders and the military. The people's motivation to cooperate or not can easily be swayed by the perception of an effective and unified strategy. In the absence of such unity and effectiveness, the people become vulnerable to insurgent propaganda and their sympathy and support could sway to the insurgency.

The following statements best describe the structural and systemic organizational flaws of the Philippine counterinsurgency operations:

1. There is a need to strengthen the National Command Authority. A National Security Adviser is needed, separate from the department of national defense. A clear chain of command must be established between the President and the operational commanders.
2. The Defense Department should derive its national security strategy from the guidance and direction of the Commander in Chief.
3. A national agency is needed to direct and control all counterinsurgency effort of the civil government.
4. The laws of the land are the true representation of the

people's will and therefore should be respected and obeyed. The laws should promote the general welfare. They should not be used as the protection and shield of the insurgents.

5. The military is an instrument of the national leader. It should not engage in policy making nor enforce its own policies.

6. Military operations and campaigns should be directed and controlled by the National Command Authority. Military officers are responsible and accountable to the national leadership for the conduct of these operations.

7. Police matters are different from military operations. The military should not engage in police matters, and the police should not conduct military operations.

8. Intelligence and counterintelligence are vital components of counterinsurgency. They should be integrated at the national level.

These are statements of perceived flaws in the organization of the counterinsurgency effort in the Philippines. These will serve as a reference and guide towards the formulation of a model counterinsurgency organization. They are explained further in the following discussions.

#### The National Command Authority -

Every sovereign nation is responsible for the conduct of its own defense against any threat to its integrity. The single most important element to national security is the quality of the top leadership upon whom the burden of responsibility is placed. This national leadership is normally called the National Command Authority. In most countries, the president in a dual capacity as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces makes up the NCA. The same is true in the case of the Philippines. What is not clear however are the roles of the Secretary of National Defense and

the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. So far, there is no existing law that designates the Secretary of defense as a part of the NCA or as part of the chain of command of the armed forces. Whether the chief of staff is part of the chain of command or just an adviser to the president is also not clear. In this situation, it is not unusual for the appearance of divergent strategies and policies among the President, the Secretary and the military as shown earlier.

The NCA of the United States is worth mentioning as a model of an effective and working national command authority. It has been tested in many wars and conflicts, the latest of which was the Gulf War. The U.S. NCA is composed of the President and the Secretary of Defense together, or their duly deputized alternates or successors. The term NCA is used to signify constitutional authority to direct the armed forces in their execution of military action. Both the movement of troops and execution of military action must be directed by the NCA; by law, no one else in the chain of command has the authority to take such actions.<sup>4</sup> Constitutionally, the ultimate authority and responsibility for the national defense rests with the President of the United States. The passage of the National Security Act of 1947 authorized the U.S. president to use his secretary of defense as his principal assistant in all matters relating to the department of defense. It is clear that the secretary has constitutional authority, direction and control over the military departments and is responsible for the effective, efficient and economical

operation of the department.<sup>5</sup> The Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986 identifies the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff as the principal military adviser to the president. The chairman does not exercise military command over any combatant forces.<sup>6</sup>

The U.S. example of an NCA is a good model for any country to adopt or as a guide to develop one for legislation.

#### The Chain of Command -

The chain of command is the flow of command authority and responsibility from the commander -in-chief to all levels of the military organization. This includes the authority to give orders and expect compliance from subordinate units. This chain clearly pinpoints responsibility and accountability.

An unclear and undefined chain of command is very destructive to a military organization. This situation could easily lead to abuse of authority, uncompleted missions, absence of unity of command and confusion in military operations. The officers of the AFP are aware of the importance of this chain of command, and they have it within the organization. The fuzzy area is among the President, the Chief of Staff, and the Operational commanders.

The absence of a clear legislation makes the duties and functions of the chief of staff very arbitrary. This needs to be clarified whether he is an adviser or a commander inside the chain of command. In the meantime, the chief of staff's signature

on any military directive or campaign remains subject to question. This is mainly why Campaign Plan Net Trap "Lambat Bitag" does not have teeth as far as the civilian agencies are concerned.

#### National Security Agency -

There is a need to coordinate all non-military efforts in counterinsurgency. This is especially so because these non-military efforts form the bulk or the main effort of the government. The military effort should remain supportive and secondary. It cannot be the main agency to perform political and economic solutions to the conflict. This is what the Philippines need in order to coordinate all the civilian government agencies. This national security agency forms the structure by which the command authority of the President reaches down to all levels of government to the smallest community.

This civilian government chain is already existing in the Philippines. From the President, it runs down to the Provincial governors, then the municipal mayors and lastly the barangay captains. What is needed is a national agency to help the president exercise her authority over this chain.

#### Security Laws -

The laws of the land are intended to promote the common good of society. They should also be used to protect the integrity of the state and its citizens. When insurgents use the law to shield



and protect itself from prosecution while conducting subversive and insurgent activities, then there is a need to amend or improve the law. The laws against rebellion and subversion need to be updated. A law against engaging in insurgency needs to be enacted. The absence of sufficient and just laws leads to frustrations among security forces in dealing with insurgents. Because of the difficulty to file charges in court or the difficulty to obtain evidence under the existing laws, insurgents taken into custody after a long struggle to find and capture them are often released by the courts. These frustrations are sometimes manifested in the form of indifference or abuse by these security elements. This flaw could only be corrected by legislation. The law should fully authorize the military to launch operations against identified insurgents in specified areas. In the absence of this authority, the military should not initiate any action. The possibility of abuse and civilian casualties is high when military units operate without authority.

#### Responsibility and Accountability -

War is too serious an endeavor to be conducted without knowing who is responsible and accountable. The authority to engage in counterinsurgency operations includes in it the responsibility and accountability for its outcome. All commanders of operating military units should accept this responsibility and accountability. This responsibility and accountability should be re-enforced by a judicial system to ensure that they are taken

seriously. This is important in order to instill discipline and morale and efficiency in the organization. The organization should be a model of discipline if it is to be credible as the defender of the people.

Military courts need to be established at all levels of the military up to the battalion level. This includes the need to update military justice manuals and regulations as well as court procedures to be used in this process.

The state of discipline of the AFP is a reflection of the judicial system that it has. Shortly before the downfall of Marcos, the discipline of the AFP was very low. In 1983, Admiral Robert Long, CINCPAC was quoted by the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, saying " I can categorize the AFP today as incapable of performing what I would call as organized functions that any armed forces should be able to provide for its own self defense."<sup>7</sup>

The AFP is similar now to what it was then. Its judicial system remains the same. Misfits and scalawags continue to remain in the ranks with very insufficient effort to file charges against offenders. The continuing campaign of RAM to discredit the AFP leadership is a manifestation of this situation. Discipline and morale obviously need to be improved, and this could be done by strengthening the judicial systems.

## Police and Military Matters -

Insurgency is a problem with very thin lines between law enforcement and military operations. Since it is mainly a crime against the state it is easily understood as a police concern. But since it involves big groups of armed men with which the police normally cannot cope, then it becomes a military matter of grave national security concern. This gray area results in a mixture of actions which include the police undertaking military operations, and military units conducting police operations like arrests, seizures, and searches inside houses and premises.

The counterinsurgency effort must be able to clearly differentiate between the two. Now that the Philippine National Police has been established, the distinction should be resolved among police agencies and military commands.<sup>8</sup>

## Intelligence and Counterintelligence -

Intelligence is the main input in the formulation of national security policies. It is necessary that all intelligence efforts be integrated and analysed at the national level. The national command authority should be the main consumer of intelligence.

The department of national defense should have direction and control over intelligence agencies of the military. Military intelligence requirements and tasks should emanate from the department the results of which should be used to formulate strategy and policy to be recommended to the President.

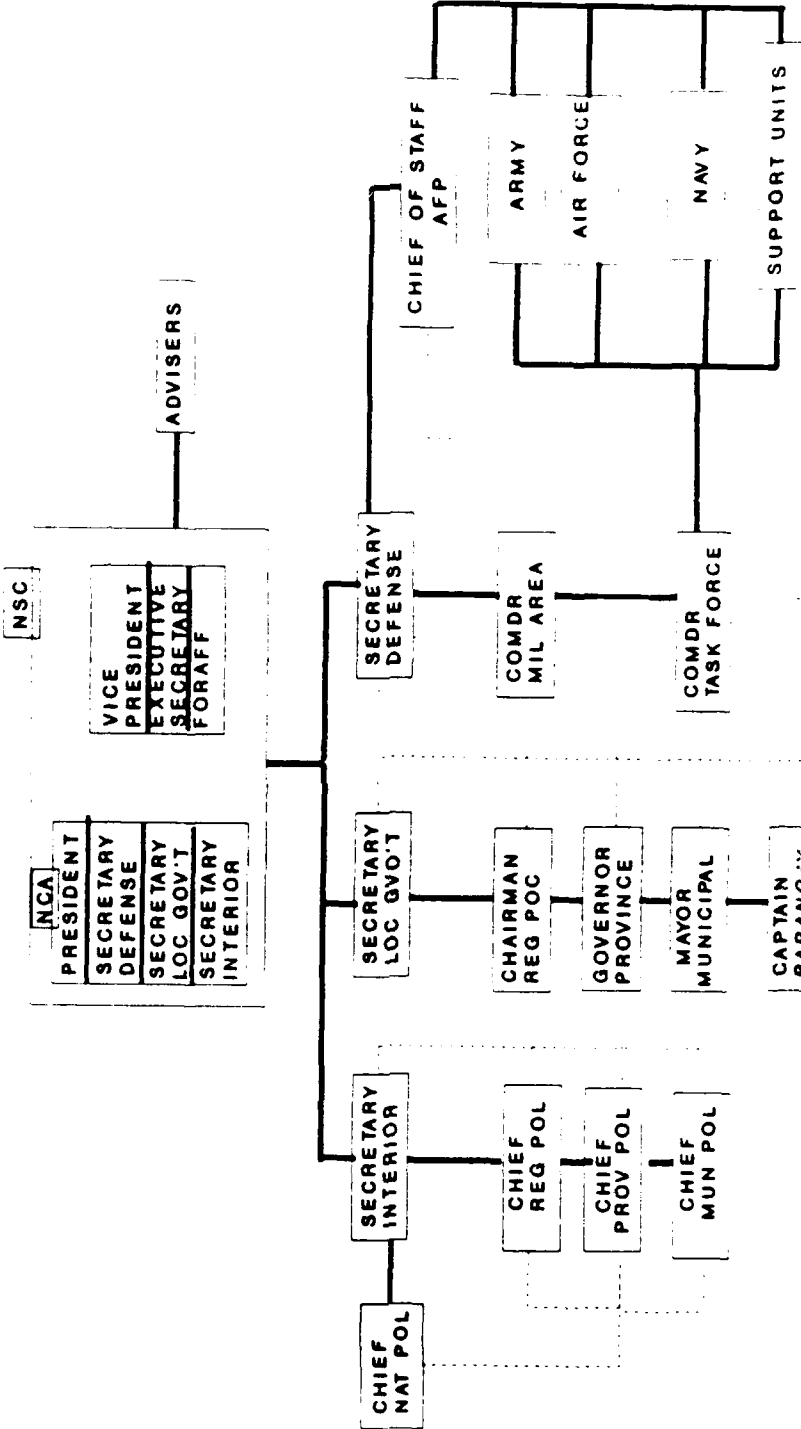
For a small country like the Philippines, it is not necessary to have overlapping intelligence agencies that cover international and global concerns. The intelligence unit of the defense department is sufficient for national concerns especially the counterinsurgency effort.

#### A Model Counterinsurgency Organization -

Considering all the imperatives of success and the organizational flaws of the Philippines, the following is a model organization for counterinsurgency operations (See Figure 2). This model eliminates the organizational flaws earlier mentioned and is basically designed to unify the national efforts under the direction and control of the national command authority.

The organization is composed of the National Command Authority (NCA), the National Security Council (NSC) and the three branches of the counterinsurgency effort, the military, the civil government and the police. The NCA is composed of the President as Commander-in-Chief and the three cabinet secretaries (defense, local government and interior) as deputies to the President. The NSC is composed of the NCA and a number of other key leaders of government deemed necessary by legislation. The additional members of the NSC may include the Vice-President, the Executive Secretary and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs. The NSC serves as policy formulation and advisory body to the President. The President may designate an advisory group outside of the NSC to act as additional and independent security advisers.

## FIG 2



The chain of command for counterinsurgency operations flows from the NCA to the three branches through the respective departments. The department of defense manages the planning and direction of military functions, and the chain flows from the secretary of defense to the commander of the military area, then to the different counterinsurgency task forces. The Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces does not need to be within the chain of command but serves as the policy making body of the armed forces and makes use of its communications and control facilities to transmit directions and orders from the NCA. The Major Services of the Army, Air Force and Navy serve as the responsible bodies to perform the administrative, organizational, training and equipping functions of their respective services.

The civil government branch is composed of the secretary of local government at the national level, a coordinating council at the regional level, a governor at the provincial level, a mayor at the municipal level and a captain at the barangay level. The regional coordinating council is composed of the governors of the provinces within the region with an elected chairman from among them. The unity of effort at the regional level is important and critical because of the geographic and ethnic configuration of the country.

The third branch, the national police, is under the secretary of Interior. The secretary of interior manages the planning and direction of the operations of the national police. The chain of command is similar to that of the military in that

the chief at the national level does not need to be within the chain of command. His office serves as the policy making body and is responsible for the administration, organization, training and equipping the national police. The police chain of command flows directly from the secretary of interior to the regional chiefs, then to the provincial chiefs and then to the municipal chiefs. Excluding the chief of national police from the chain of command simplifies the flow of command and responsibility from the NCA to the operators in the field and reduces the unnecessary layers of bureaucratic activity.

This model organization integrates the military, civilian and police efforts in the counterinsurgency. The people's participation comes easily through their involvement in their respective communities, the barangays. This organizational model clearly defines the chain of responsibility from the president down to the lowest levels in all the military, the civil and police efforts. A national counterinsurgency plan can be effectively formulated and executed through this chain. The Clausewitz theory of the trinity of government, army and people is integrated under this organizational model. A campaign plan like the "lambat bitag" can be easily implemented with all the phases being assigned with proper authority to the right agencies with favorable chances of response.

## A Model Counterinsurgency Force -

A military organizational model is needed to compliment the national model and to address the need to adjust the armed forces in its secondary and supportive role. A completely military solution is counted as out of the question. The main effort should come from the civilian sector to win the hearts and minds of the people. This main effort is primarily education and awareness, public information, health care, infrastructure building, creation of jobs by encouraging investments, land reform, professional civil service, efficient police and security services, and peace and order. The military function is to identify, locate, and neutralize the armed insurgent force including their leaders. Military operations to execute this function should be of low intensity in order to avoid violating the rights of innocent civilians. If possible, operations are to be conducted only when the targets are clearly identified, located and canalized.

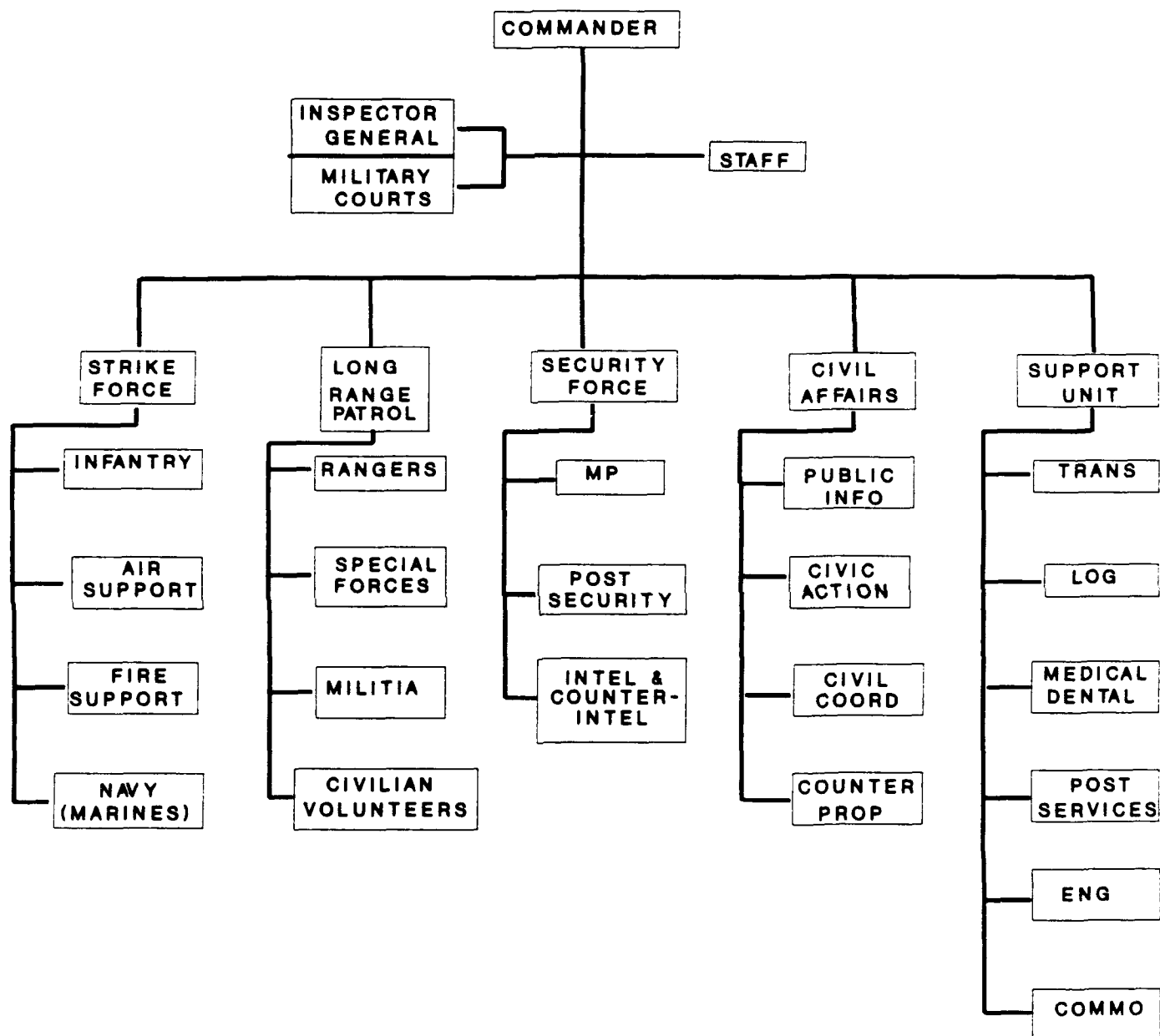
The effective military organization to deal with this kind of mission therefore should be tailored to perform the tasks of identifying, locating and neutralizing the insurgents in coordination with the people of the locality. The model as shown in the chart is composed of five main elements, namely, 1 the strike force 2. A long range patrol 3. a security force 4. a civil affairs unit and 5. a support force. (see Figure 3)

The criteria for this model counterinsurgency force are the following: 1.High mobility 2. strong intelligence 3.effective



# FIGURE 3

## COUNTERINSURGENCY TASK FORCE



command and control 4. guerrilla warfare qualified 5. civil affairs operations qualified.

The role of the special operations forces is important in this model. These forces will penetrate insurgent influence areas and perform the mission of identifying and locating them. They do so in small unit formations, in extended time frames, and hostile environment with little support. They will perform the same insurgent mission of mixing with the people and living with them. They may do so in either clandestine or overt methods.

A conventional force is also necessary to form the strong strike force that hits the insurgents once they are identified and located. Their mission is to hit hard and decisively. They take the cue from the special operations forces for the right time and place to launch an operation.

The need to coordinate the military efforts and civil efforts is left to the civil affairs unit. The important missions of this civil affairs unit will be detailed later.

The insurgent's subversive activities need to be neutralized also. Their efforts to subvert the loyalty of personnel inside the military organization is real and continuing. A security force to neutralize these efforts is therefore essential. The battle of the minds should first be won among the members of the counterinsurgency force.

A support group is necessary to fulfill all the necessities of the whole force. They include finance, transportation, personnel administration and welfare, installation services,

logistics and supplies, communications facilities, recreation and sports and spiritual services.

This counterinsurgency force should be organized as a single unified force with a commander answerable to the commander-in-chief. It is preferable that there should be no intervening headquarters between this unified command and the national command authority. The Major Service commanders perform the job of organizing, training, and supporting their respective elements belonging to that counterinsurgency force. The Chief of Staff and the GHQ, performs the job of adviser to the President and communication link between the president and the force.

The counterinsurgency force formulates its own campaign plan as derived from the guidance of the NCA and consistent with the national plan. The commander is directly responsible and accountable to the President. The force commander possesses coordinating authority with civil counterparts and the police in the area of jurisdiction.

To fully appreciate the validity of the model, a more detailed explanation of the five main elements are discussed below.

The Long Range Patrol Force - This force performs the missions of identification and location of insurgent leaders, concentrations, guerilla bases, logistics centers and routes, support elements and sources of support. This force should be light, mobile and guerrilla warfare trained and qualified. The special operations forces of the United States are best suited for these types of

missions.

The size of this patrol force ranges from a squad to a company, depending on the situation and mission. The mission of this force is not to fight the insurgents but to identify and locate them for the strike force to deal with. However, they can be allowed to engage the insurgents in direct action provided they have the superiority and surprise.

One purpose of the long range patrol is to avoid large conventional government forces to be going around looking for the insurgents. One tactic of the insurgent force is to lure large concentrations of government forces into their bases and ambush them. So, instead of a large conventional force moving around, the recon patrols can do the job better and safer.

Adequate and effective C3 systems is necessary for the patrol units to maintain a secure and steady contact with the rear headquarters. Timely dissemination of information about the location of insurgents also necessitates the availability of these C3 systems.

Escape and extraction procedures are also needed by the patrols. There is big possibility for being mixed up with insurgent forces in remote and inaccessible areas. So, before a strike is done against the insurgents, they should be extracted from the area.

The long range patrol units should have adequate training and qualification in the following; 1. guerrilla warfare 2. insurgent organization and doctrine 3. local terrain 4.

population, language and customs 5. demolition and bomb disposal  
6. clandestine communications systems 7. escape and evasion  
techniques 8. Human intelligence (HUMINT) management and  
operations 9. survival techniques.

This training should enable the patrol to accomplish missions under difficult conditions. They are in the forefront of the entire military effort. They go where the insurgents are and they do what the insurgents do and endure. These patrols are the ones that will destroy the fighting will of the insurgents and reduce them to roaving armed bands. The rest of the effort will be an easy job by the strike force.

The Strike Force is a highly mobile light infantry unit supported with close air support and combat transport by the Air Force. The Navy may provide combat transport in ship to shore operations. The strength of the ground force component ranges from a company to a brigade depending upon the strength of the enemy. This is the equivalent of the hammer that will hit hard against a clearly identified and located insurgent force.

The strike force retains its training in conventional ground warfare. It has the capability to fire and maneuver in small units and move in difficult terrain. The mission of this strike force is to conduct direct action against clearly defined and located targets. These targets include insurgent concentrations, base camps, training centers, and logistics centers.

The strike force strikes quickly and withdraws upon termination of the mission. It does not stay long in the area.

This force does not engage in police operations, but may coordinate the same with police agencies in the area. They can provide support to police agencies in making dangerous arrests of large groups of insurgent suspects.

The strike force is based in a centrally located base camp where it can radiate easily in all areas of the jurisdiction. It maintains sufficient reserves to maintain the initiative at all times. While not engaged, it concentrates on training and rehearsal. Social, recreational and sports activities are encouraged to be developed in coordination with the local population to maintain rapport and goodwill with the people.

The strike force trains and qualifies in the following: 1. small unit tactics of fire and maneuver 2. pursuit operations 3. insurgent organization and doctrine and 4. guerrilla warfare

The strike force needs to project a model of discipline in order to win the sympathy of the population. Their appearance, behavior and professional conduct in operations need to be spotless in the eyes of the people. The role of education and training becomes a prime concern for the commander of the force. Military justice needs to be implemented effectively to deter bad behavior and to punish erring personnel. This function will be the role of the security force.

The Security Force is needed to win the battle of the minds right inside where it matters most, the counterinsurgency force itself. All elements of the force must remain convinced that they are fighting for a just cause. This security force is tasked with

the mission to negate the attempts of the insurgents in subverting the loyalties of the troops.

This security force is composed of the military police, the intelligence and counterintelligence units, and the installation and facilities security forces. The MPs are tasked to enforce law and order among military units, the CI units take on the subversion and disloyalty cases, and the security forces protect installations and facilities. MPs and security forces may take on missions of population control during disaster and relief operations and military operations in built-up urban areas.

One of the main weaknesses of the Philippines is in the judicial system. There is a need to strengthen the judicial system in the military in order to clean itself and improve its disciplinary image. The counterinsurgency force needs to have an effective judiciary system since it is critical to security in the broadest sense.

The Civil Affairs Unit is also an important counterinsurgency element. The civil affairs unit is closest to civilian contact and activity. This force is the military's link with the civilian community and the civil leadership within its area of jurisdiction. Civil affairs include education, public information, religious matters, disaster relief operations, evacuation and population control, civic assistance to depressed areas and coordinations with the civil agencies.

In all of these civil affairs, the military is always in the supportive role. The objective of civil affairs is to unify the

army with the people and with the civilian leadership at all levels of government, including the police.

The staffing of the civil affairs unit follows the functional areas of its mission instead of the traditional staffs of the military organization (personnel, intelligence, operations and logistics, the civil affairs staff are on education, judicial affairs, religious affairs, cultural affairs, political affairs, public information and economic development). Civil affairs has as its target the activities of the National Democratic Front (NDF), and how to negate them. Its main strategy is to use public information and propaganda to win the hearts and minds of the people.

The Support Force is also an important counterinsurgency element. Unfortunately, the budgetary support allocated by congress to the armed forces is really short of the requirements. In view of this difficulty, the support force commander is really in the most difficult situation to accomplish his mission. The transportation mission is the first to suffer. Fuel shortage, lack of vehicles, poor maintenance are the perennial problems of support groups in the Philippines. The next is individual and unit combat equipment. The Philippines has no industrial base to manufacture these combat items. Individual soldiers and units usually resort to surplus items, improvised materials and imported ones to fill up the need. The result is a proliferation of different boots, uniforms, belts, ammunition carriers, tents, sleeping bags, mess kits, canteens, bayonets, helmets, rifle



slings, cooking utensils and food rations. The AFP is trying its best to address this problem, but without the funds, these attempts are all futile. It is little wonder that the individual soldier and officers of combat units are able to continue and fill the deficiencies only by resorting to self initiated procurement process. It is not considered serious because of the same and even worse conditions the insurgent force whom they are facing are having.

The individual initiatives mentioned earlier may consist of coordination with the wealthier sectors of the community. In many cases, transportation requirements and sometimes billeting spaces are being offered without cost. In some cases, rations are also being provided by rich families. The sad part of these initiatives is that they could be cited as corrupt practices. Because almost everybody understands the financial difficulties of the AFP, nobody ever files charges of corrupt practices against soldiers or officers. Most often, it is the insurgent group which exploits the situation. They make these logistics difficulties an issue against the AFP. In many ways, this complicates the counterinsurgency efforts.

On the insurgent's side, their logistics totally depend on the people. They finance their needs in what they call "revolutionary taxes", which is no different from extortion. They collect by force and intimidation from the non-supporters, and donations from sympathizers and supporters. To some extent, the insurgency and counterinsurgency is a battle of financial

support.

The commander of the support group is really the most challenged among all the counterinsurgency elements mentioned in the model. In the present reality, many support group commanders have already given up the challenge. They don't have anything to issue, so they just sit back and say "none-in-stock".

#### The Intervening Force -

What is the role of an intervening force like the United States in a counterinsurgency operations? The U.S. policy is best stated by FM 100-20/AFP 3-20 which says:

US policy recognizes that indirect, rather than direct, applications of US military power are the most appropriate and cost effective ways to achieve national goals in a LIC environment. The principal US military instrument in LIC is security assistance in the form of training, equipment, services and combat support.

The United States will also employ combat operations in exceptional circumstances when it cannot protect its national interests by other means.'

One of the most important imperatives for success in counterinsurgency operations from the point of view of the host country is sovereign and independent policy. This is needed to maintain the respect and credibility of the host government and to maintain the initiative of its leaders as well as the local military organization. The U.S. must not repeat the mistake in South Vietnam where the U.S. government practically took the initiative out of the South Vietnamese government and assumed all the responsibility and initiative in the war. The Vietnam war was no longer seen as a struggle between Vietnamese people, but it

became a war between the US and the Vietnamese people. The debates about the reasons for failure never mentioned this important point. If reviewed carefully, this is an important consideration in future involvement of the US in LICs in third world countries.

If ever there is a need to employ combat forces in exceptional circumstances, the intervening force may contribute to the strike force and the support force of the host country counterinsurgency force (see model). The strike force could be very helpful especially if the insurgents have reached the second stage of the revolution. The material support and the technology that US support forces possess are also valuable to the host government. Both forces need to refrain from intervening in the planning and policy formulations of the host government. The initiative must remain in the host government's leadership and organization, in order to maintain the respect and credibility in the eyes of the people.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Headquarters Department of the Army and Air Force, FM 100-20/AFP 3-20, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict, Washington D. C. 5 December 1990, p. 1-5
2. Gareth Porter, Counterinsurgency in the Philippines: Aquino was right, SAIS Review, Summer /Fall 1987, vol 7, # 2, p. 97
3. Armed Forces of the Philippines, Campaign Plan "Lambat Bitag", Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, 1988
4. Armed Forces Staff College (AFSC) Pub 1, The Joint Staff Officer's Guide 1991, Norfolk ,Virginia. p. 2-2
5. Ibid., p. 2-2
6. Ibid., p. 2-11
7. Chapman, Inside the Philippine Revolution, P 181
8. The Philippine National Police (PNP) had been fully activated in January 1991. Together with this activation is the abolition of the Philippine Constabulary which had been a part of the AFP. The Constabulary became the nucleus of the PNP.
9. Headquarters Department of the Army and Air Force, FM 100-20/AFP 3-20, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict, p. 1-2

## CONCLUSION

The conflicts in the Third World are struggles for survival between opposing political forces and usually between the incumbent government and the insurgents. The intensity is low considering the non-availability of lethal conventional weapons which superpowers possess, but the stakes are high, the life and death of the incumbent government or the insurgents.

This study dealt with the broader term low intensity conflict. It covered all the threat groups that threaten the Philippines aside from the communist insurgents. Most of the discussion was about the communist insurgency. The discussions about organization also centered more on the communists. This is justified by the more serious challenge that they pose to the Philippine government.

The presence of more than one challenge makes the Philippine situation a distinct case. The challenge is more profound and complex, and presents a better material for students of modern low intensity conflicts.

This paper has discussed the term low intensity conflict from the point of view of a host country. The term LIC is more synonymous with insurgencies from this point of view. The operational categories of peacekeeping and peacetime contingencies most often do not apply to them. It applies more to the United States as a super power in performing its role as leader of the free world. So, even if the title of this paper

adopted LIC, the subject discussed is more on the insurgency going on in the Philippines.

The challenge of the insurgency in the Philippines starts from the nature of the society where the seeds of conflicts are sown. The current social problems are traced from the historical gap between segments of the population. This large gap is found in almost all aspects of the economic, social, and political fabric of society. These social discrepancies still exist today. The solution is in the judicious process of balancing these differences and creating a bigger middle class of citizens that could stabilize the situation.

There is every hope that the middle class will rise over time due to awareness and the growing equality of opportunity. Meantime, the short term solution of how to organize the counterinsurgency effort is paramount.

The response to the challenge of the insurgents is in the hands of the government forces and how they should organize to fight the challenge. The struggle is in the minds and hearts of the population, and victory is expected to come from non-military operations. The military effort comes in as a supporting role.

The strength of the insurgents comes from their organization, and the difficulty of the government is organizational as well. The solution therefore is to strengthen the government organization, at the same time work towards the destruction of the insurgent's strength. The model organization presented by this study is designed to unite the

counterinsurgency efforts into one single direction. It emphasizes the strengthening of the national command authority and the clarification of the chain of command. It also addresses the need to create a national agency to oversee the national counterinsurgency effort without too much need for additional bureaucracy.

Even if the role is secondary and supportive, the military needs to be organized effectively to be able to deal with the armed group of the insurgents. The model organization is designed to address the need to be focused on the weakness of the insurgents. The deception, the terrorism, the fallacy of their ideology needs to be exposed. This can be done by an organization that considers a proper linkage with the civilian population. The model force organization has the civil affairs unit specially designed to do just that.

The need to focus on the source of strength of the insurgent guerrilla forces is also addressed by the model organization. The long range patrol force, the strike force and the security force are designed to focus on the insurgent's link with the people, the tactics of ambushes and the subversion of government forces. The insurgent's link with the people can be severed by the long range patrol. And the guerilla tactic of ambushing large concentrations of government forces is negated by the calculated use of the strike force. Finally the subversion of friendly elements can be stopped by the security force. Therefore the design of the model counterinsurgency force is to hit on the

enemy weakness and evade their source of strength.

The model organization can also adjust easily to any intervening power assistance. Indirect military assistance in the form of material and supplies can easily fit into the host nations organization through the support unit. Any deployment of military troops can also fit into the host nations organization through the strike force. The design therefore is advantageous to both the host country and the intervening force without creating coordination problems.

The model military organization combines the use of conventional forces and special operations forces. There is no more reason for creating or making major organizational changes in existing military configurations in either the host nation or the intervening force.

Internal problems will continue in the Philippines as part of a continuing process of social and national development. The stability of the society comes as a joint effort of the three main elements of national power, the government, the army, and the people. An effective organization is necessary to blend all these three into a single working unit. This organization can help much in the attainment of the imperatives for a successful counterinsurgency campaign. Hopefully, the models for both the national organization and the military force structure that this paper presented can help any student, government or political organization in the search of solutions to low intensity conflicts.



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